



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

*The right system for bright futures*

## Arizona Early Childhood Development & Health Board Cochise Regional Partnership Council

### Work Session Meeting Minutes October 08, 2010

#### Call to Order

The Work Session Meeting of the First Things First Cochise Regional Partnership Council was held on Friday, October 8, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. at the First Things First Regional Office, 3643 South Highway 92, Suite B, Sierra Vista, Arizona 85650.

#### Council Members Present:

Ana Bae, David Howe, Jane Strain, Nancy-Jean Welker

#### Council Members Absent:

Marge Dailey, Mario Gonzales, Chuck Hoyack, Renae Humburg, Melodi Polach, Ginger Ryan, Michael Vetter

#### Others Present:

Melissa Avant, Cristal Martin

Regional Coordinator Melissa Avant welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at approximately 10:25 a.m.

#### Call to the Public

There was no response to Call to the Public

#### Discussion of Professional Development Strategies

Melissa Avant, Regional Coordinator, provided the Regional Council with handouts for Professional Development strategies and discussed Strategy 2; Speech/PT/OT Therapists. The current funding from state fiscal years 2010 and 2011(ONLY) will allow for 1-5 therapists depending on the specialty within Cochise County for years 2010 through 2014. Ms. Avant also provided the current strategy status. The Arizona Department of Health Services has been administering the program for all Regional Councils with this strategy. The grantee has experienced a slow start up and implementation of the program due to staff turnover and the complexities of developing such an innovative program design. The grantee allotted significant resources to conducting the research necessary regarding administration of a loan forgiveness and stipend program. The program is now in full operation and accepting applications according to program guidance. Outreach and Marketing efforts will be conducted through

advertisements in professional periodicals, journals, web based media, and newspapers. Additionally, the grantee is establishing an ambassador program with each of the educational institutions and residency programs to effectively recruit recent graduates. Quarterly update meetings are held between FTF and the grantee to ensure timely and effective implementation of the project. Target audiences for recruitment and retention in order of priority are: current therapists working in the field; new graduates and recent graduates completing residency programs; communities at large.

Priority/Need within Cochise County: The need is high. Currently there are children on waiting lists for services from the Arizona Early Intervention Program. Based on the 2008 and 2010 Cochise Needs and Assets Report this is still a priority for the Regional Council.

Funding Plan: Funding can come out of population based allocation.

First Things First Approved Priority: Supports and Services for Families, Professional Development System and Access to Quality Health Care Coverage and Services. This strategy builds a skilled and educated work force of health workers for children birth to five in the county. These individuals will provide valuable support and education to families and increase the quality of life for children.

Sustainability: The current numbers can be maintained until 2014 and then be revisited as capacity is reached.

Ms. Avant discussed Strategy 4; TEACH scholarships with the Regional Council. For SFY 2010 there are 29 Scholars at \$135,000. For SFY 2011 there are 15 Scholars at \$62,385. This amounts to scholarships at \$3,220 PLUS \$900 for additional support (books, travel, childcare, tutoring). Currently there are seven Scholars accessing the Regional slots and three applications are pending.

Priority/ Need within Cochise County: The need is high. The educational level of staff working with children directly impacts the quality of the child's experience. Based on information obtained from the 2008 and 2010 Cochise Needs and Assets Report, the majority of individuals working as teachers and assistants within the child care centers and homes have only a high school diploma or the equivalent.

Funding Plan: Funding can come out of population based allocation.

First Things First Approved Priority: Quality, Access, and Affordability of Regulated Early Care and Education Settings, Professional Development System. This strategy provides a quality environment for children placed in child care.

Sustainability: The current numbers can be maintained for 2012 and be reassessed in 2013.

Ms. Avant discussed Strategy 6; Mental Health Credentials with the Regional Council. For SFY 2010 and 2011 30 Professionals are funded at \$49,999. This particular strategy started in late January 2010 – recruitment efforts started early February and 3 groups or tracks were formed. Due to the late contract award and individual education levels, specialized Infant Mental Health training, and reflective supervision hours previously received, participants are not ready for endorsements at this time. It is expected that the majority of participants will be endorsed or closer to receiving endorsement by June 2011. Currently Infant/Toddler Mental Health Coalition of Arizona Membership fees and Endorsement Application fees were paid for 11 of the 18 current participants at the end of the 4th quarter.



Priority/Need within Cochise County: The need is high. Few specialists have the specialized training necessary to fully understand early childhood mental health concerns relating specifically to infants and toddlers. The intent of the endorsement is to recognize professional development of infant and family service providers within the diverse and rapidly expanding infant and family field. This endorsement will offer individuals in the infant and family field of professional development plan that focuses on knowledge, best practice skills and supervised work experiences that lead to increased confidence and credibility within the infant and family field. Of additional importance, the endorsement will inform prospective employers, agencies and peers about culturally sensitive, relationship-based practices promoting infant mental health.

Funding Plan: Funding can come out of population based allocation.

First Things First Approved Priority: Supports and Services for Families, Professional Development System. This strategy is intended to increase the knowledge in the area of healthy social emotional development of infants and toddlers in service providers working with young children

Sustainability: The current numbers can be maintained for 2012.

The Regional Council discussed a Mental Health Consultant as a possibility for a new strategy. The Regional Council requested the following information:

Coverage/ratio of mental health professionals to children in Cochise County.

List of individual background information for participants in the Infant Mental Health training program.

#### Adjournment

There being no further discussion, Chair Howe adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

Dated this 21<sup>st</sup> day of Oct, 2010.

Submitted By: Cristal Martin  
Administrative Assistant

Approved By: David Howe  
Chair, David Howe